

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Technical Committee

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**Date:** May 11, 2005

**DGA Number:** None

**Recommended Action:** Create a Comprehensive Plan implementation program that:

- Sets-out a list of actions and an approximate timeline for actions the City should take to implement the policies of the updated Comprehensive Plan.
- Establishes a community indicators program to track progress in meeting the community's goals as stated in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

**Reasons the Proposal should be Adopted:** The program should be established because:

- It responds directly to policies in the Participation, Evaluation, and Implementation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, calling for implementation of policies that reflect the community's vision and values expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.
- It clearly identifies in one location the actions needed to implement the Comprehensive Plan.
- It allows City officials and the Redmond community to systematically track progress in meeting stated goals and objectives.

- Information gathered and analyzed as part of the proposal can help the City identify needs such as new programs, regulatory updates, and capital investments, as well as contribute to a improved understanding of the Redmond community.

## **I. APPLICANT PROPOSAL**

### **A. Applicant**

The City of Redmond

### **B. Reason for Proposal**

Redmond is concluding a major Comprehensive Plan update; a key element in the updated Plan involves adopting a strategy to assist in the implementation of new and amended policies. This proposal entails the creation of an implementation program to address two questions: what steps are needed to implement the updated Plan and to what extent are we making progress in achieving community goals?

The proposed implementation program is needed to ensure that Redmond's updated Comprehensive Plan remains useful over time. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to communicate the community's long-term values and aspirations and to guide the physical development of the City as well as certain aspects of its social and economic character toward these goals. Without periodic monitoring and evaluation, it is difficult to determine if Redmond is achieving the community's vision. To that end, this proposal identifies actions that the City should take to ensure implementation of the Plan, and establishes community indicators against which the City can measure its progress.

## **II. RECOMMENDATION**

The Technical Committee recommends the proposal as shown in Exhibit A. The proposal represents months of collaboration among City staff, as well as input from the business community and the community at large. A special effort was made to receive input from across City departments since the proposal is topically wide-ranging and will require an ongoing commitment from several departments to collect and report certain data. That collaboration has resulted in a proposal that recommends: a) indicators for which data is already (or is expected to be) gathered, and b) implementation actions with ambitious, yet reality-based timeframes.

Following are examples of implementation actions. The implementation actions are drawn from all parts of the Comprehensive Plan; a sample action follows each type.

Implementation Actions answer the question, “What does the City need to do to implement the Comprehensive Plan?”

- Capital projects and investments.
  - Construct Bear Creek Parkway extension (2 to 5 years)
- Community awareness and participation initiatives.
  - Make critical areas maps easily accessible through the City’s website (0-2 years)
- Interjurisdictional projects.
  - Develop an interlocal agreement with at least one city to consolidate at least one specific city service (0-2 years)
- Plan updates and reviews, including specific area plans.
  - Develop station area plans for high capacity transit sites (2 to 5 years)
- Process development.
  - Develop a process to promote awareness of potential impacts among residents considering a home near manufacturing areas (0-2 years)
- Program development and program implementation.
  - Grow and replicate the Social Enterprise project (2-5 years)
- Regulatory updates and reviews
  - Review regulations and building code and update as needed, promoting build green and low impact development (0-2 years)
- Resource identification and needs analysis.
  - Identify surplus land appropriate for housing (2-5 years)

The proposal also includes indicators that measure progress toward meeting the goals bulleted below; a sample measure follows each goal. Community indicators allow the City to measure progress with respect to adopted goals and policies. Benchmark measures answer the question, “To what extent is Redmond making progress in achieving its goals?”

- Conserve agricultural lands and rural areas, and protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment.
  - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife juvenile and adult fish counts
- Retain and enhance Redmond’s distinctive character and high quality of life, including an abundance of parks, open space, good schools and recreational facilities
  - Percentage of residents living with ½ mile of outdoor recreation areas
- Emphasize choices in housing, transportation, stores and services

- Total innovative housing units created
- Support vibrant concentrations of retail, office, service, residential, and recreational activity in Downtown and Overlake
  - Proportion of City's growth located in Downtown and Overlake Centers
- Maintain a strong and diverse economy, and provide a business climate that retains and attracts locally owned companies as well as internationally recognized corporations
  - Employment growth in Redmond with respect to employment trends regionally and nationally
- Promote a variety of community gathering places and diverse cultural opportunities
  - Number of city-sponsored performances by arts groups in Redmond per year
- Provide convenient, safe and environmentally friendly transportation connections within Redmond, and between Redmond and other communities for people and goods
  - Transportation program delivery
- Remain a community of good neighbors, working together and with others in the region to implement a common vision for Redmond's future
  - Total volunteers and volunteer hours logged as part of major City-organized volunteer efforts

Endorsing the proposal creates a *management plan* as an implementation tool for the Comprehensive Plan. The management plan would include the implementation actions and community indicators. Since the management plan looks at the long term, it is not expected to change dramatically each year. However, implementation actions would be subject to annual review so that completed or unnecessary actions could be removed, new actions could be added, and timeframes could be adjusted. All such changes would need to show consistency with Comprehensive Plan policies and goals.

Once endorsed, the community indicators component of the proposal would be implemented by beginning to collect and analyze needed data. An initial report would be published in Spring 2006 for data from 2005, with annual reports following. While adjustments should remain rare for the sake of data continuity, indicators will be reviewed to make adjustments for data that is missing, difficult to obtain, irrelevant, or otherwise requiring change. Again, this would need to be consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies and goals.

### III. ALTERNATIVES

#### A. ISSUES CONSIDERED AND ALTERNATIVES

1. Endorse the proposal. The proposal is intended to:

- Carry out policies in the Participation, Evaluation, and Implementation Element calling for benchmarks and implementation actions.
- Track Redmond's progress in taking actions consistent with the updated Comprehensive Plan.
- Track Redmond's progress in meeting the goals set out in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Help inform needed updates to policies or regulations, budget discussions, program needs, and to help contribute to general understanding of the Redmond community.

2. Don't endorse the proposal. This alternative would be inconsistent with City policy calling for an implementation program such as the one proposed here and would weaken attempts to monitor and implement, due to lack of policy support.

#### B. COMPARISON WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES, APPROACHES

Formalized implementation and evaluation strategies are becoming more widespread in communities throughout the country. In general, they share the same objective: to provide information and analysis as to the extent to which jurisdictions are meeting their stated goals. With special regard to benchmarking, Dr. Judith Innes, professor of City and Regional Planning at the University of California Berkeley, sets out a three-pronged test for indicators: they must have validity, sensitivity, and reliability. Validity means that the benchmark measures the trend it says it measures. Sensitivity means that the indicator should respond to change in a timely manner and in proportion to the magnitude of the change. Reliability means that the indicator must consistently measure the same phenomenon. The proposal for Redmond, in addition to the programs discussed below, aims to satisfy those criteria in order to get meaningful results.

There are three local models in particular that have influenced the proposal presented here: Kirkland's *Implementation Strategies*; *King County Benchmarks*, for which Redmond provides some data; and Northwest Environment Watch's *Cascadia Scorecard*.

##### Kirkland

Kirkland's implementation program provides a useful comparison since because Kirkland faces similar issues as Redmond, and because Kirkland and Redmond plan under the same legal framework. Kirkland's "Implementation Strategies" is incorporated into its

Comprehensive Plan and is analogous to the implementation actions proposed here. Its stated objective is to help achieve the vision of the Comprehensive Plan. To do this, Kirkland's program lists policy-directed "Implementation Tasks" categorized either as projects or as ongoing activities. While Kirkland does not provide a timeframe for completing the tasks (as this proposal does), it does assign relative priorities to each item. Kirkland first instituted its Implementation Strategies program in 1995. The 2004 amendments reflect that some actions have been taken, some remain on the "to-do" list, while new actions have been proposed.

Kirkland has not established a separate indicator program. However, some of its implementation tasks call for *monitoring* and *measuring*. On the whole, Kirkland's program is substantially similar to implementation actions component to the proposal presented here; the program's durability indicates a measure of success in helping the City direct its actions toward implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

### King County

King County's program is most similar to that presented here in that King County began its *Benchmarks* program in order to track progress in meeting goals specified in the Countywide Planning Policies. Furthermore, its benchmarks are divided into general topic areas, similar to the proposal here. The County describes its program as "alert[ing] us to what we are doing well, and to where we need to do better." The proposal here aims to provide that same guidance. One strength of the County's program that Redmond should try to emulate is data consistency. King County is in its tenth year of benchmark reporting, and data from year to year is most often comparable. Without comparability, tracking progress becomes difficult.

There are important differences between the County's program and the proposal presented here. The most obvious difference is that the County engages only in benchmarking, while the Redmond proposal would do that and track progress in completing implementation actions. This is appropriate since many of Redmond's updated policies refer to specific programs or projects requiring City action. Second, the County focuses on those policies relating to growth management, whereas the proposal here covers all parts of Redmond's Comprehensive Plan, emphasizing new or updated policies. Third, the County reports all of its data biannually. It makes sense for Redmond to report its data on various time scales (annually, biannually, and every five years) since Redmond's indicators would be more variable in content as well as scope; thus, trends for one indicator may be evident with annual reporting, while other indicators may only show change over a longer timescale.

### Northwest Environment Watch

Northwest Environment Watch published its *Cascadia Scorecard* earlier this year. While it is in many respects quite different from the proposal here, it offers insights nonetheless. The *Scorecard* aims to quantify progress toward meeting goals in: health, economy,

population, energy, sprawl, forests, and pollution; it places an emphasis on sustainability throughout. Two key differences stand out. First, the Cascadia region (Washington, parts of Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, California, British Columbia, and Alaska) is orders of magnitude larger in size than Redmond. That means the report must focus on high-level indicators that have meaning throughout the entire region. Redmond need not focus on broad indicators like life expectancy, but rather on indicators like park acreage that have meaning on the city level. Second, the *Scorecard* has only seven indicators, whereas this proposal includes dozens. Again, that is because the *Scorecard* focuses on high-level indicators, whereas Redmond is concerned about implementing its Comprehensive Plan and contributing to improved understanding of the Redmond community.

The *Scorecard* still yields valuable insight. For example, its measure of economic success is composed of an index that includes standard measures like the unemployment rate, but also includes measures like the poverty rate and median income, thus showing not only how much wealth is generated, but also how it is distributed. To that end, this proposal includes both kinds of economic indicators. The *Scorecard* also provided ideas on how to capture information relating to the availability of services near population centers.

#### Greensboro, North Carolina

Further afield, Greensboro, NC adopted an *Action Plan*, much like the implementation actions proposed here, that identifies short-, mid-, and long-term “priorities for implementation.” It identifies three types of actions: programs; regulations and standards; and capital investments. Those three categories are included in some form in this proposal in addition to other categories. Greensboro takes care to note that the “*Action Plan* does not preclude certain actions from being implemented earlier or later than indicated, subject to the availability of resources.” Redmond, too, will have to adjust its schedule of implementation actions based on factors that may or may not be within the City’s control. The timeline, however, does provide a sense of prioritization as well as a reasonable estimate of when projects and programs ought to be commenced and completed.

## **IV. SUPPORTING ANALYSIS: FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **A. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

In January 2003, the City Council selected one of three draft growth alternatives as a “preliminary preferred strategy” for growth in Redmond through 2022. The preferred strategy was the basis for further study and work in 2004 and 2005 to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan and Community Development Guide.

The preliminary preferred growth strategy focuses on improving the supply and diversity of new housing in Redmond and emphasizing land use and transportation strategies to reduce the traffic impacts associated with more growth. It continues to support the

community's vision of a quality natural environment, lively and walkable Downtown, and healthy economy.

Now that the major update process to the Comprehensive Plan is largely finished, it is time to ensure that implementation of new and updated policies follows, consistent with the community's vision.

## **B. RELATIONSHIP TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE AMENDMENTS**

This implementation program proposal is not a Comprehensive Plan or Development Guide amendment. As such, it is not appropriate to analyze it in light of the process set out for such amendments, but it is appropriate to discuss how this proposal coordinates with the larger comprehensive planning process.

Comprehensive Plan and Development Guide amendments set the policy and regulatory framework for Redmond, especially as it relates to land use. An implementation program assumes the validity and integrity of that framework, helping set it into motion while evaluating its ability to meet the community's goals. Such feedback is crucial to the success of the Comprehensive Plan and requires the support of the many departments involved in the implementation effort as well as Redmond's appointed and elected officials. Only with such support can the City most effectively monitor progress toward meeting its goals and toward taking actions called for in the Comprehensive Plan. Implementation and evaluation allows the Redmond community to see where it needs to focus its efforts in order to support a program that is working spectacularly, or to retool a policy that is not having its intended effect.

## **V. AUTHORITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL, PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW**

### **A. Subject matter jurisdiction:**

The Redmond Planning Commission and the Redmond City Council have subject matter jurisdiction to hear and decide whether to endorse the proposed implementation program proposal.

### **B. Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA):**

This is a procedural action that is categorically exempt from SEPA.

### **C. 60-Day State Agency Review:**

No state agency review is necessary, as this proposal is not a Comprehensive Plan or Development Guide amendment.



**D. Public Involvement:**

The City of Redmond solicited input from community members previously requesting specific notification of Comprehensive Plan-related program updates. In December 2004, staff brought an initial proposal to the Planning Commission to raise their awareness toward the implementation program and to seek initial feedback. In January and March 2005, staff brought the proposed benchmark program before the Parks Board to solicit feedback from board members and community members in attendance. In March 2005, staff met with members of two subcommittees of the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce.

The Planning Commission will also hold a public meeting on May 25 to provide additional opportunities for citizens to learn about the proposed implementation program, provide comments, and find out about next steps. The City has also used its web site to enable citizens to get a copy of the proposal and provide comments.

**E. Appeals:**

Not applicable to this proposal.

## **VI. LIST OF EXHIBITS**

### **Exhibit A: Implementation and Community Indicators Program**

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| Roberta Lewandowski, Planning Director | Date |
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| Dave Rhodes, Public Works Director | Date |
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